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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER JA'AFARI TO APPOINT TURKMEN SUNNI WOMAN AS NEW DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) Both Prime Minister Ja'afari and President Talabani told Ambassador Khalilzad on July 26 that they have decided to appoint Aneesah Mohammad Nouri, a Turkmen Sunni woman, to the position of Deputy Prime Minister. They said that KRG President Masoud Barzani initially resisted the idea but he relented yesterday. Ja'afari said that Nouri's appointment would be officially announced tomorrow.

¶2. (C/NF) This appointment represents a positive step towards improving the Iraqi Government's image in addressing women's affairs, especially during the current constitutional debate on women's rights. As a Turkmen, Nouri may prove valuable in the Government's bilateral relationship with Turkey. Additionally, her Sunni background should provide more credibility to the Government's outreach efforts to the Sunni community.

¶3. (C/NF) Comment: Born in Kirkuk, Nouri is a practicing OBGYN with no prior known political experience. She is reportedly a member of the Turkmen Consultative Council, an advisory board to the Iraqi Turkmen Front. Despite this affiliation, several sources have noted that Nouri is a political independent. She is married to Nawzad Auchi, the head of the Auchi Tribe, one of the most well known families in Kirkuk.
Khalilzad